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PROLOGUE

TO THE PLAYS AT SEDBERGH RACES, 1783.

WISE was the Man, whatever was his Station.
Who midſt our Cares adviſed ſome Recreation,
Bade us attempt our private Griefs to ſmother
By Dreſs, and Chat, and ſitting near each other;
For many a Joy at Home is often wanting,
And ſtouteſt Hearts will break with SECRET Panting.
It is not TIME ALONE that wears the Prude,
She owes her wrinkles to her SOLITUDE.
He too was wiſe, who when a Match was running,
Where Grecian Jockies uſed both Speed and Cunning,
Frankly confeſs'd ſuch Paſtime no Diſgrace,
"For human Life reſembled much a Race";
A daily Race, a buſtling Crowd, a Jumble,
Where ſome ſucceed, ſome joſtle, and ſome tumble:
Some loudly triumph, every Wiſh poſſeſſing,
Some homeward ſneak with Countenance diſtreſſing,
And tho' they're married, ſleep without careſſing.
Still there's ſome Prize for which all Mortals enter,
Some favorite Object where their Wiſhes centre;
For which they puſh, all Dangers diſregarding,
Reſolv'd to win, or hazard the laſt Farthing.

THE high-bred Courtier, not content with prancing
On Turkey Carpets, ſtill aims at advancing;
Breaks from the Croud, and with Ambition burning,
Now on full Speed, and now moſtly nicely turning,
Hopes for himſelf to gain the foremoſt Station,
But ſeldom runs——to ſave a ſinking Nation.

THE Miſer—of Mankind the Scorn and Curſe,
Fails not to ſtart—whene'er he ſees a PURSE:
He truſts not to mere Speed, or Blood, or Breeding,
By gradual Steps more certain of ſucceeding;
Creeps near the Ground, and in his Strength confiding,
Oft wins the Prize by dint of ſober Riding.

ALL Maids, or young, or old, this wiſh diſcover,
To change the Beau into a faithful Lover;
For this they cloath, each Limb put into training,
Study their Wind—for Talk is entertaining,
And never ſtrip, untill the Prize is gaining:
Hoping, tho' Cupid let a Rival in,
He'll handſomely contrive to BRING THEM IN.

FOR us, this Night, in hopes to give you Pleaſure,
We'll run five Heats, that's commonly our Meaſure,
Not for mere Profit—credit our Aſſertion,
Since we by Day partake of your Diverſion,
And therefore GRATIS would our paſtime give,
If Mortals on pure GRATITUDE could live:
Your Bounty this forbids—and therefore we
Muſt, half-conſenting, take the uſual Fee;
Muſt doubly thrive, by Profit and by Pleaſure,
Hearts full of Merriment, Hands full of Treaſure.

SUCH is this happy Spot—formed to ſurprize,
It ſeems of late—A NORTHERN PARADISE,
A Garden of Delights—more than IDEAL,
Who taſtes of SEDBERGH Sweets will find them REAL:
Our ſhadowy Scenes will hardly now content you,
You're uſed to Subſtance, Elegance, and Plenty.

LONG may theſe Sports an annual Bliſs beſtow,
To chear each drooping Breaſt, and baniſh Woe:
And long, kind Heav'n, our Patron's Life extend,—
To real-Merit ſtill the gen'rous Friend.

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